



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau

NCCIC

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CHILD CARE in RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural areas have particular challenges in developing strategies to increase the supply, quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care, and to expand the options available to parents. The following publications and organizations provide information on research and resources to support early care and education services in rural communities.

FEDERAL AGENCIES

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture**
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)
Families, 4-H & Nutrition
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 2201
Washington DC 20250-2225
202-720-7441
World Wide Web: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/>

CSREES seeks to improve early childhood, school-age and teen programs by linking the teaching, research, education, technology, and 4-H youth development expertise of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, land-grant universities, and county Cooperative Extension Services offices to local communities across the United States. As part of the initiative, the system provides access to research, best practices, and education resources related to child care, including rural child care, through the National Network for Child Care Web site at

http://cyfernet.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfdb/browse_3.php?cat_id=493&category_name=Rural+Child+Care&search=NNCC&search_type=browse.

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture**
Rural Housing Service National Office
Community Programs
Room 5037, South Building
14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250
202-720-4323
World Wide Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/cf/cp.htm>

Community Programs, a division of the Rural Housing Service, is part of the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development mission area. Community Programs administers programs designed to develop essential community facilities for public use in rural areas. These facilities include schools, libraries, childcare, hospitals, medical clinics, assisted living facilities, fire and rescue stations, police stations, community centers, public buildings and transportation. Through its Community Programs, the Department of Agriculture is striving to ensure that such facilities are readily available to all rural communities.

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture**
National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP)
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4225-S
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-2394
World Wide Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/nrdp/>

NRDP brings together Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments, as well as the private for-profit and nonprofit sectors, to work in partnership for the improvement of rural America's communities. The following publication is available from NRDP's Welfare Reform Task Force:

- *Child Care and Transportation Strategies for Rural Communities: Meeting the Welfare Reform Challenge* (1998) provides community leaders, State and Tribal officials, and others with ideas and resource contacts for building rural strategies. This document is available on the Web at <http://www.doleta.gov/wtw/documents/child.cfm>.

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture**
Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS)
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250
202-720-1400
World Wide Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs>

RBS works in partnership with the private sector and community-based organizations to provide financial and technical assistance to businesses and cooperatives located in rural communities. Among the programs offered are Business and Industry Direct Loans (B&I Direct), Rural Economic Development Grants (REDG) and Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG). These business programs are administered at the State level by Rural Development State Offices.

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture**
Rural Information Center (RIC)
10301 Baltimore Avenue, Room 304
Beltsville, MD 20705-2351
800-633-7701
World Wide Web: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/>

RIC provides information and referral services to local, State, and Federal government officials; community organizations; health professionals and organizations; rural electric and telephone cooperatives; libraries; businesses; and rural citizens working to maintain the vitality of America's rural areas. The Rural Child Care Center FAQ section of RIC's Web site at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/faqs/childc~1.htm> provides information on starting a rural child care center and funding resources. RIC's Web site also includes a database on Federal Funding Sources for Rural Areas. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/funding/federalfund/ff.html>.

■ **U.S. Department of Agriculture
Rural Housing Service (RHS)**

1400 Independence Avenue SW
Room 5037, South Building
Washington, DC 20250
202-720-4323

World Wide Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/>

Through programs such as the Community Facilities (CF) grant and loan programs, RHS provides funding for the development of essential community facilities, including child care centers in rural areas and small towns. Grants are also available through RHS's Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) for organizations interested in conducting technical assistance programs to develop the capacity of rural communities and organizations to improve rural housing, community facilities, and economic development projects.

■ **U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)**

800-USA-LEARN or 800-872-5327

World Wide Web: <http://www.ed.gov>

The focus of the 21st Century Community Learning Century (CCLC) Program, originally authorized under Title X, Part I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), is to provide expanded learning opportunities for participating children in a safe, drug-free and supervised environment. The 21st CCLC program enables schools to stay open longer, providing a safe place for homework centers, intensive mentoring in basic skills, drug and violence prevention counseling, helping middle school students to prepare to take college preparatory courses in high school, enrichment in the core academic subjects as well as opportunities to participate in recreational activities, chorus, band and the arts, technology education programs and services for children and youth with disabilities. About 6,800 rural and inner-city public schools in 1,420 communities—in collaboration with other public and nonprofit agencies, organizations, local businesses, post-secondary institutions, scientific/cultural and other community entities—are now participating as 21st CCLCs.

This program was formerly a discretionary grant program under the Improving America's Schools Act. Discretionary grantees remain eligible for continuation funding through the end of their grant terms; however the program is transitioning to a State administered program. Many States around the country are conducting competitions to award 21st Century Community Learning Center grants. Contact information for the States 21st CCLC program is available on the Web at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/contacts.html#state>.

■ **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
Child Care Bureau**

370 L'Enfant Promenade SW
Washington, DC 20447

World Wide Web: <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb/>

The Child Care Bureau is dedicated to enhancing the quality, affordability, and availability of child care for all families. The Child Care Bureau administers Federal funds to States, Territories, and Tribes to assist low-income families in accessing quality child care for children when the parents work or participate in education or training. In February 2000, ACF's Child Care Bureau sponsored a National Leadership Forum on "Expanding Child Care to Underserved Populations: Meeting the Needs of Rural Communities." The Forum brought together leaders and recognized experts in the field to focus attention on the critical need to make high-quality, affordable, and accessible child care available in rural communities. Video clips of Forum speakers are available online at <http://nccic.org/forum/>.

- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
Head Start Bureau
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Quality Improvement Center (MSHS QIC)**
1825 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington DC 20009
800-864-0465
World Wide Web: <http://www.mhsqic.org/>

MSHS QIC is an entity that provides culturally and linguistically appropriate training and technical assistance to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs nationwide.

- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD)**
451 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20410
202-708-1112
World Wide Web: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/>

CPD administers grant programs that help communities plan and finance their growth and development, increase their capacity to govern, and provide shelter and services for homeless people. CPD's Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED) program provides funds for capacity building at the State and local level for rural housing and economic development and to support innovative housing and economic development activities in rural areas, including child care facilities. For additional information about RHED contact the Rural Gateway at 1-877-RURAL-26 or on the Web at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/economicdevelopment/programs/rhed/index.cfm>.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- **National Center for Rural Early Childhood Learning Initiatives (NCRECLI)**
46 Blackjack Road
P.O. Box 6013
Mississippi State, MS 39762
501-662-325-4954
World Wide Web: <http://ruralec.msstate.edu/index.htm>

NCRECLI is a program of the Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute, which is part of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education, Mississippi State University. NCRECLI promotes research on the quality, accessibility, and replication of early educational intervention services for at-risk young children and families in rural America.

PUBLICATIONS

■ *Young Children and the Rural Information Gap: The Weaknesses of Major Data Sources for Examining the Well-Being of Rural Children* (December 2004), by Jeffrey Capizzano, Urban Institute, examines national data sets that provide source data for child well-being indicators. The study finds that data confidentiality protocols and small sample sizes limit the extent to which child well-being indicators can be estimated for rural children. This resource is available on the Web at http://ruralec.msstate.edu/reports/Dec_04/report-dec04.pdf.

■ *Welfare Reform: Rural TANF Programs Have Developed Many Strategies to Address Rural Challenges* (September 2004), by the General Accountability Office, presents information on (1) the size of the rural TANF caseload (that is, the number of families receiving monthly cash assistance), how that caseload is distributed, and how the caseload's size has changed over time; (2) the challenges and strengths that rural TANF programs have in implementing welfare reform; (3) the strategies being used to address these challenges; and (4) what the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is doing to help rural areas address these challenges. The report GAO-04-921 is available on the Web at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04921.pdf>.

■ *Implementing Welfare-to-Work Programs in Rural Places: Lessons from the Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies Demonstration Evaluation* (April 2004), by Andrew Burwick, Vinita Jethwani, and Alicia Meckstroth, by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, examines whether innovative programs can improve employment and other outcomes for rural low-income people. This report chronicles the implementation experiences of three programs: Illinois Future Steps; Building Nebraska Families (BNF); and Tennessee First Wheels. The findings and lessons on the implementation of the Rural Welfare-to-Work (RWtW) demonstration programs focus primarily on program development and client experiences; institutional partnerships and local connections; and outreach, staffing, and management. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare_employ/rural_wtw/reports/rwtw/rwtw_title.html.

■ *Finding Resources to Support Rural Out-of-School Time Initiatives* (2003), by Elisabeth Wright, published by Finance Project, discusses the resource challenges that program leaders in rural communities are facing. It describes Federal programs that can support rural out-of-school time programs and identifies strategies that State and local leaders can use to support and sustain out-of-school time in rural communities. This resource is available on the Web at www.financeprojectinfo.org/publications/ruralost.pdf.

■ *The Importance of Place in Welfare Reform: Common Challenges for Central Cities and Remote-Rural Areas* (June 2002), by Monica G. Fisher and Bruce A. Weber, published by the Brookings Institution, reviews existing literature and analyzes new data to determine how welfare and economic outcomes vary across the geographic continuum. It describes the specific challenges to employment caused by child care issues related to availability, location, transportation, and hours of work. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/es/urban/publications/weberfull.pdf>.

■ “A Stark Plateau—California Families See Little Growth in Child Care Centers” (July 2002), *Policy Brief*, by Bruce Fuller, Shelley Waters Boots, Emilio Castilla, and Diane Hirshberg, published by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), charts the rise in the number of center and preschool enrollment slots in California. It notes that rates of center supply growth are only occurring in higher income counties or rural counties, where a significant portion of capacity-building dollars has gone. This information is available on the Web at http://pace.berkeley.edu/policy_brief_02-2.pdf.

■ *Rural Child Care in North Carolina: System Needs and Development Strategies* (2002), by Jeffrey D. Lyons and Susan D. Russell, prepared by the Child Care Services Association and North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, examines child care system data and suggests improvement strategies for rural child care availability, quality, and affordability. For additional information, contact Child Care Services Association at 919-967-3272 or on the Web at <http://www.childcareservices.org/Publications/Publications.html>.

■ *The Illinois Rural Families Program: Summary Report* (2002), by the Department of Human and Community Development, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, cites the accomplishments of the Illinois Rural Families Program (IRFP) including determining needs for child care in rural areas and recommending policies to improve child care availability. This report is available on the Web at <http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/~hcd/rural/IRFPSummaryReport.htm>. For more information about IRFP activities and research, contact Liesette Brunson, IRFP Research Coordinator, at 217-333-8704 or e-mail lbrunson@uiuc.edu.

■ “Child Care for Welfare Participants in Rural Areas” in *Rural Welfare Issue Briefs* (November 2000), by Laura J. Colker and Sarah Dewees describes some of the child care challenges that low-income rural residents face and child care services welfare recipients in rural areas use. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare_employ/rural_wtw/reports/cc_wlf_part/cc_for_welfare.pdf.

■ *Getting Kids Ready for School in Rural America* (August 2000), by Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), for the U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, is intended to help family, school, and community leaders better understand the concept of school readiness, what it means in rural America, and how community members can help rural children succeed. Although this is not a how-to manual, readers will find this document to be a useful starting point for exploring the issues and needs that face young children and their families in rural areas. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.ael.org/rel/rural/pdf/getting.pdf#contents>.

■ “Child Care Issues Impacting Welfare Reform in the Rural South” *Informational Brief* No. 9, (November 1999), published by the Southern Rural Development Center, looks at child care in Florida, Arkansas, and South Carolina in order to provide a snapshot of child care for TANF recipients in the Southern region. This resource is available on the Web at <http://ext.msstate.edu/srdc/publications/reform09.htm>.

■ *Rural America and Welfare Reform: An Overview Assessment* (1999), by the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), Rural Welfare Policy Panel, provides a conceptual framework for understanding the unique rural context for welfare reform, and the implications of this context for welfare reform outcomes in rural areas. It states:

While much of the employment focus is on adult welfare recipients, approximately two-thirds of the people served by TANF are children. Thus, one of the important questions in mandating work for single-mother families is how their children will fare as they go to work. This may be particularly important for rural mothers who may have longer commute times and, therefore, longer periods of time away from their children. In general, maternal employment has been found to have positive or neutral impacts on children (Zaslow and Emig, 1997). However, it is important to note that job quality is a factor in these research findings and that most research focuses on voluntary entry into the labor market. (page 10)

There has been very little research that explicitly compares childcare provision and child outcomes in rural and urban areas. From Census reports (for example Casper, 1996) and the Urban Institute 1990 National Childcare Survey (Hofferth et al., 1991) we know some important things. Rural areas have fewer trained professionals, and fewer regulated childcare slots than urban areas. Rural families depend more on childcare given by relatives and friends. Employed rural mothers are more likely than urban employed mothers to use childcare provided by relatives and are less likely to use center care (Casper, 1996; Hofferth et al., 1991). Rural families with employed mothers and preschoolers spend less per week on childcare (Hofferth et al., 1991) and travel greater distances to obtain childcare than urban families. A study in Oregon found that distances traveled from home to childcare were much greater in rural than urban areas (Emlen, 1991). Individuals in the most rural areas traveled about double the distance traveled by those in the largest urban area (Emlen, 1991). (page 14)

In both rural and urban areas, the supply of childcare for infants is not adequate to meet the demand at prices that low income families can afford. And childcare for children in school is almost nonexistent. These mismatches between supply and demand are exacerbated in rural areas, because of the lack of scale economies needed to make centers profitable and because of lower incomes of rural workers that dampens effective demand for childcare slots. The greater distances traveled to obtain childcare further contributes to the daycare problem in rural areas. The longer travel times to work may mean that some working parents are likely to spend a greater amount of time away from their children. (page 14)

This document is available on the Web at <http://www.rupri.org/publications/archive/old/welfare/p99-3/index.html>. For additional information, contact RUPRI at 573-882-0316 or on the Web at <http://www.rupri.org/>.

■ *The High Cost of Child Care Puts Quality Care Out of Reach for Many Families* (1998), an issue brief from the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), states the following:

Child care is costly even in rural areas. While child care prices are somewhat lower in rural areas, even families in rural communities often cannot escape the high cost of child care. In most of the rural areas for which CDF collected data, the cost of center care for a preschool child falls between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per year. For example, the average annual cost of center care for a 4-year-old in Mercer County, W.V. is \$3,500 and in the rural area of Franklin County, MO., the cost is nearly \$4,000. (page 4)

In over half of the 39 rural areas for which data on this type of care are available, average child care center costs for 4-year-olds are above \$3,500 per year, including seven rural areas where average child care center costs for 4-year-olds are above \$5,000 per year. (page A-5)

In half the 35 rural areas for which we have data on this type of care, average child care center costs for 12-month-olds are above \$4,500 per year, including 11 rural areas where average child care center costs for 12-month-olds are above \$5,000 per year. (p. A-5)

In half of the rural areas for which we have data on this type of care (20 out of 40 rural areas), the average cost of family child care for a 4-year-old is over \$3,700 per year. (page A-10)

In over half of the rural areas for which we have data on this type of care (24 out of 39 rural areas), the average cost of family child care for a 12-month-old is \$3,900 per year or more. (page A-10)

In general, family child care is somewhat less expensive than center care. However, in a number of communities – especially rural communities – the average cost of family child care is higher than the average cost of center care. For instance, in 11 States (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon, and Rhode Island), the rural area surveyed has higher average costs for family child care than for center care for an infant and/or preschooler. (page A-10)

For additional information, contact CDF at 202-628-8787 or on the Web at <http://www.childrensdefense.org>.

■ “Iowa Cares: How Rural Iowa Benefits from Child Care Centers” (January/February 1996), in *Rural Cooperatives*, Vol. 63, No. 1, by David Poe and John Madding, describes the broad social impact of quality child care on a small town in Iowa. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/info/iowa.html>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

■ *America’s Forgotten Children: Child Poverty in Rural America* (2002), by Save the Children, presents the “facts and faces of rural poverty” and recommends solutions to this often hidden problem. The report features compelling stories from children and youth living in some of the most poverty-stricken rural areas in the country. The Executive Summary and complete report are available on the Web at http://www.savethechildren.org/usa/report_download.asp.

The National Child Care Information Center does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.